



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	High Priority Use Case for exascale computing software. This activity is a call for proposals.
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>EPSRC on the behalf of UKRI, plan to allocate up to £3 million (at 80% FEC) to support research into exascale computing software and algorithms. This funding is part of the Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) ExCALIBUR programme.</p> <p>This specific call aims to support creative, multi- and inter-disciplinary research and will focus on projects which will research methodologies to redesign the use cases for supercomputers of the near future and beyond. EPSRC define a Use Case as: A co-ordinated range of activities, which aims to develop simulation code with a focus on applications identified by the relevant communities as benefitting from exascale software development.</p> <p>The call is an open call to all qualifying individuals and groups.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	Consultation with the ExCALIBUR steering committee, programme partners and Design and Development Working Groups (DDWGs) has occurred. These are all stakeholders with different levels of involvement in the ExCALIBUR programme.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	UK's research community and industrial sector concerned with the future of exascale hardware and software; government representatives; UKRI staff.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed. All panel members will receive an unconscious bias briefing.</p> <p>The activity will be monitored by the Research Infrastructure Theme in EPSRC in conjunction with the ExCALIBUR Programme Board.</p>

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. For policy changes, funding activities and events EPSRC will aim to:

- Select venues that are accessible and where possible accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation. This includes for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. Included in the interview invitation letter is a request for any access issues to be notified.
- All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.
- Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#).
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertise these widely to reach the largest possible audience.
- Support and encourage panel members to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions. Staff will work closely with the Panel Chair(s) to agree approaches that are designed to minimize opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process. This includes managing environmental conditions, such as providing appropriate breaks.
- Support flexible working of stakeholders.
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels. Staff will adhere to a mixed panel policy and endeavor to achieve the minimum 30% for the underrepresented gender on the panel.
- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Provide EPSRC staff with tailored unconscious bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors.
- Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	Potential for both	As the panel will be held virtually, the accessibility of a venue may have a positive impact. However, this may also have a negative impact on those with dyslexia or hearing impairments.	Panel will be held virtually. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that any circumstances which could affect the participation can be accommodated wherever possible. Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
Gender reassignment	None Identified		

Marriage or civil partnership	None Identified		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative on those with caring responsibilities		Support will be offered for people with caring responsibilities, and reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible.
Race	Potentially negative	Racial bias may be perceived	Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
Religion or belief			We have tried to avoid major religious holidays when setting dates. All panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that may affect their ability to participate and how this can be accommodated.
Sexual orientation	None identified		
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative		In line with EPSRC policies, the assessment panel will be mixed gender.
Age	Potentially negative		Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel

			<p>presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.</p>
<p>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</p>	<p>Potentially negative</p>	<p>The call will be open during school holidays .Those with caring responsibilities may be impacted.</p>	<p>Following feedback on timescales of previous ExCALIBUR calls, we have extended the opening time for this call to allow for additional time in these cases.</p>

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	A number of risks and potential negative impacts have been identified and considered as part of the call design. Reasonable adjustments will be made and by adhering to the standard peer review principles and the risks have been mitigated as far as possible.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .		
2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	x	Possible risks and bias associated with this activity have been identified and activities adapted accordingly. ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the activity and EPSRC will review this EIA accordingly. Reasonable adjustments will also be made wherever possible.

Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	26/01/2022
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Billy McGregor	26/01/2022	1	version created